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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused May 29 news coverage on the historic meeting between KMT Chairman Wu Poh-hsiung and his Chinese Communist Party (CCP) counterpart Hu Jintao in Beijing Wednesday; on new developments in cross-Strait relations; and on the fuel price hike in Taiwan, to be followed by increases in various commodity prices. The centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" ran a banner headline on page three that said "Hu [Jintao] Pledges: There Should Be Viable Ways for Taiwan to Participate in the World Health Organization."

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" criticized the Wu-Hu meeting and said President Ma Ying-jeou's cross-Strait policies are actually pushing the Taiwan people toward ultimate unification with China. A separate "Liberty Times" analysis said Beijing's policies regarding direct transportation across the Taiwan Strait and allowing Chinese tourists to Taiwan are merely economic bait - its ultimate objective is to annex Taiwan. An op-ed piece in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" criticized President Ma's inaugural speech and said it offered little of substance to Taiwan. An editorial in the pro-unification "United Daily News," on the other hand, urged Beijing to "face the reality" of the existence of the Republic of China while interacting with Taiwan on the basis of the "1992 Consensus." End summary.

A) "Ma Administration's Policies Are Pushing the Taiwan People toward the Road of Unification [with China]"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 700,000] editorialized (5/29):

".... The negotiation platform set up by the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party is a welcome sign for the Taiwan people as long as it can contribute to alleviating tension across the Taiwan Strait. But the contact between the political parties of the two countries should remain limited to the level of the private sector and must not be defined, as claimed by President Ma, as the second-track [of communication] between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, otherwise it will go beyond the bounds of the role and competence of a political party. Any formal talks between Taiwan and China must be done on a country-to-country basis, with mutual recognition and respect. If not, [we] would rather keep the platform idle than allow ourselves to be belittled just for the sake of [resuming] talks....Ma's actual practice has been paving the way for [the island's] unification [with China] even though he claims that unification between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait is unlikely 'within our lifetimes'. In other words, Ma may not be able to witness [Taiwan's] unification [with China] within his lifetime, but his policies and practice are actually pushing the Taiwan people toward the road of unification. ...."

B) "KMT and CCP Both Hail the Chinese Nation [in an Attempt] to Package the One China Principle"

Journalist Su Yong-yao noted in an analysis in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 700,000] (5/29):

"During his current visit to China, Wu Poh-hsiung decried that 'both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to the Chinese nation.' Similarly, during his meeting with Wu, Hu Jintao mentioned the 'persistence of safeguarding the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation.' Both the KMT and Chinese Communist Party were using the same rhetoric and it appeared that relations between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait have been getting closer. In reality, the basis of the Taiwan-centric awareness is being eroded.

...

"For Taipei, efforts to alleviate cross-Strait tension and to facilitate social and economic exchange between the two sides are aimed at expanding a foundation favorable for Taiwan's development. This is the policy line of the KMT, even though it has yet to become the internal consensus in Taiwan. Beijing is trying to rope in Taiwan by inviting high-ranking [Taiwan] party and political officials to visit China and even speaking softly to advocates of Taiwan independence, but this is only to create a false appearance of a peaceful and stable cross-Strait situation. Beijing's short-term objective is to erase its negative image in the international community caused by its crackdown on Tibet and the Olympic torch relay. In the long run, Beijing's ultimate goal remains to annex Taiwan, using direct transportation across the Taiwan Strait and Chinese tourists visiting Taiwan as its economic bait. ..."

"In this vein, when Hu said he 'will discuss the issue of Taiwan's participation in international activities,' it seemed evident that the issue will be dealt with under the one China principle, wrapped up with the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation. If the KMT rejects such an offer, it will be akin to running counter to [Wu's statement that] 'both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to the

Chinese nation]; but should it accept the offer, Taiwan will no longer enjoy its status as an independent sovereign nation. ..."

#### C) "Ma's Speech Offered Little of Substance to Taiwan"

Ruan Ming, a consultant at the Taiwan Research Institute, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (5/29):

"President Ma Ying-jeou's inaugural speech can be summed up in two short phrases: Compromise outweighs conviction; emotion overrides reason. Ma made satisfying China a priority in his speech, quoting Chinese President Hu Jintao's three talks on cross-strait relations on March 26, April 12 and April 29, then concluding that 'His views are very much in line with our own.' And it came as no surprise that the speech was quickly approved by China's Taiwan Affairs Office, despite it lacking the conviction that the president of a young democracy should deliver. Is Ma not aware that the terms 'controversies' and 'differences' in Hu's proposal to 'shelve controversies' and 'find commonalities despite differences' also imply that China is refusing to recognize Taiwan as an independent, sovereign state?

"This is a Chinese trick to annex Taiwan through its United Front scheme -- or maybe even military force. As a popularly elected president, Ma should insist that Taiwan's independence and sovereignty brook no violation, disavowal or delay. ... Ma's speech raised a question mark. With compromise outweighing conviction and emotion overriding reason, his proposal is, at best, a short-term fix. After compromising with China and speaking emotionally to Taiwanese, then what? Where is he leading Taiwan?"

#### D) "Wu-Hu Meeting: Enlightenment of Sun Yat-sen and Interpretation of the 1992 Consensus"

The pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (5/29):

"... In addition to the 'new developments' and 'new opportunities' across the Taiwan Strait, as emphasized by both Wu Poh-hsiung and Hu Jintao, we hope to see cross-Strait relations in the wake of the Wu-Hu meeting advance in terms of 'macroscopic vision' and 'a basis in reality.' In terms of macroscopic vision, it means that both

sides of the Taiwan Strait should develop and pursue a common political philosophy, namely, the 'Sun Yat-sen structure.' The basis in reality here refers to the idea that both sides of the Taiwan Strait should have an interactive structure that can better reflect the reality, namely, the '1992 Consensus.' ...

"... The '1992 Consensus' has become more and more stable as a policy banner since the meeting between Lian Chan and Hu in 2005 and the recent Wu-Hu meeting. But the essence of the '1992 Consensus' - 'one China with respective interpretations' - remains to be embodied. Following the twists and turns over the past two decades, the Beijing authorities must be aware that to stabilize cross-Straits relations, they must first stabilize the 'Republic of China,' and that without a stable 'Republic of China,' there will be no stable cross-Straits relations. In this respect, Taipei emphasizes 'facing up to the reality,' namely, facing up to the 'fact' that both sides are ruled separately,' while Beijing stresses 'shelving controversies' -- the 'controversies' remain, except that they are put aside temporarily. Hu took the initiative in inviting Wu to visit China, a move naturally indicating that he has acknowledged Wu's status as the 'chairman of the ruling party of the Republic of China (ROC),' but it is not equal to 'facing the reality' of the [existence of] the ROC . . . . [We] sincerely hope the authorities on both sides of the Taiwan Strait will not just 'put aside controversies' but will also 'face the reality squarely' on the basis of the '1992 Consensus.' The two sides can in fact adopt models similar to those between the previous West and East Germany and South and North Korea to establish an interactive structure, and they will surely achieve greater results than those between East and West Germany and South and North Korea. ..."

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